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AMERICAN ART NEWS

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15-17 East 40th Street
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JAMES B. TOWNSEND, President and Treasurer.
15-17 East 40th Street
REGINALD TOWNSEND, Secretary.
15-17 East 40th Street

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NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Owing to the disturbance caused by war conditions in the postal service, we cannot guarantee prompt delivery of this journal through the mails. For delays in such delivery, while they should be reported at once to this office we cannot accept blame. The journal is mailed in the General New York Post Office early Friday evening of each week and should reach our N. Y. City and suburban subscribers by Saturday morning, and those at greater distances in proportionate time.

When extra copies of any issue are required, advance notice of the number of copies so required should reach this office at latest by Thursday afternoon of any week. Later orders frequently cannot be filled.

THE NOVEMBER BURLINGTON

The frontispiece of the November number of the Burlington Magazine is a fine plate showing a portion of a Piedras Negras Maya sculpture, illustrating an interesting paper by Roger Fry on Thomas A. Joyce's work on American archæology. "Portraits of Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake" form the subject of an article by J. D. Milner, accompanied by reproductions of four miniatures in the Imperial Gallery, Vienna.

A. F. Kendrick writes ably on "An English Tapestry" and the Mortlake weavers. The illustrative plate shows the tapestry panel in question, presented to the Victoria-Albert Museum by the National Art Collections Fund. Part II of H. Avril Tipping's articles on "English Furniture of the Cabriole Period" deals with "Seat Furniture" and is accompanied by reproductions of wonderful XVIII century chairs. W. R. Lethaby continues his series devoted to "English Primitives" in Part IX on "Master Walter of Durham, King's Painter (1230-1305)."

"Six Drawings by Rodin" furnish the theme for interesting notes by Randolph Schwabe. The plates accompanying the text show six of the earlier drawings of the great sculptor reproduced on their original scale.

"Additions to the Dublin Gallery," with admirable reproductions of works by Teniers the elder and younger, are commented on in the closing article.

The Burlington may be obtained from the American agent, James B. Townsend, 15 E. 40 St., N. Y. City.

QUEST OF NEW OLD MASTERS

An amusing and paradoxical feature of the revived interest in art and art collecting, plainly manifest in the increased number of visitors to the dealers' galleries during the three short weeks that have elapsed since the signing of the armistice and the close of the war, is the expressed desire on the part of even more older, but more especially newer would-be collectors for "something new." There would seem to be a prevalent idea among American art lovers and collectors that the four and a quarter years of war—during which there has necessarily been little art movement and also necessarily little importation of art works from Europe—must have enabled the dealers to find or produce new works of merit and value. Rare and choice examples, especially of the greater and lesser old masters, shown to certain collectors just before the war and even during its continuance, and admired by them, but not purchased for patriotic or financial or other reasons, now that they are in a responsive buying mood, do not seem to interest them. They say: "Yes, I like this or that work—very fine, etc., but I've seen this or that before; can't you show me something new?"

The output of Rembrandts, Rubens, Velasquezes, etc., of undoubted authenticity and worth never has been large and has not increased, and the works of these men and others of leading or lesser rank have really increased in value during the war. As Mr. Joseph Duveen told in the ART NEWS of Nov. 23 last, his firm is shipping a Rembrandt and a Velasquez back to England and has orders for other shipments of art works and objects, and there is already a "double market" for such works of value. The old masters shown here to American collectors before the war are more valuable today, and how can "new old masters" be provided to order to gratify a taste and desire for novelty?

It is possible, of course, that when conditions become more settled there will be sent here for sale some superior old masters from owners forced to sell, but a demand for these works also exists in Europe, and it must not be forgotten, as proved by the successful sales and high prices in London and Paris the past two years, that there is a new and competing element of collectors and buyers enriched by the war, in Europe.

Collectors Take Heart

Renewal of interest by a wider public in current sales of rare books and paintings is a pleasing sign of the coming of more normal times. Prices have not been high, but neither have they been kept down to the slaughter rates that marked some of the forced sales in war times. Four first folio Shakespeares brought moderately good bids recently, but of more interest is the fact that the bidders were more numerous than has recently been the case.

Collecting rare books merely because of their rarity is an amiable form of the collector's mania not confined to the very wealthy. The increase of interest indicates a greater feeling of future security among the moderately well off—men who a year ago would not have felt justified in spending a few hundred dollars on an obvious luxury. It is a forerunner of piping times of peace.—N. Y. "Eve. Sun."

C. Bertram Hartman is painting in New Hampshire, where he removed recently from his Greenwich Village home. Hr. Hartman has been painting also in Arizona and his paintings of the West are to be seen at the Montross Gallery.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Meanest Animal in the World

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS:

Dear Sir:

The meanest animal in all the world is the runty trained steer of the stockyard. That wretched beast spends his life going to the gate of putative bovine salvation and leads his kind to destruction. A sight most hideous in its symbolism, but no more hideous than some of the runty steers of art criticism, who are trying to lead the herd of confused humanity to the paths of decay. They are prostituting a great trust. Their efforts are ostensibly directed to the establishment of freedom, broad-mindedness, the square deal, but as a matter of fact they teach that the eternal verities of common decency and right living are obsolete and incompatible with art.

Charles Vezin.

New York, Dec. 4, 1918.

Customs Appraisement of "Original" Art

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS:

Dear Sir:

In your issue of Nov. 16, the case of a portrait of Huxley by Hon. John Collier, is referred to, in which the painting in question, a replica, was held for duty in Boston on the ground that it was not an original work. Mr. Collier states in an affidavit that the replica differed from the first portrait in certain respects, and claims that it was, therefore, equally an original.

In this instance, a painting which differs in any degree from a work, on which it is, in the main, founded, cannot be called a replica, by the ruling of the U. S. Board of General Appraisers. It cannot be called a copy, for it differs in certain respects from the work on which it was founded. What, then, is it but an original work?

The framers of the tariff bill of 1913, in paragraph 376, which refers to copies from paintings, etc., being dutiable at 15%, evidently had in mind the work of professional copyists—those who are to be seen in all public galleries—whose work is a slavish imitation of the originals, to the extent that the inexperienced eye might find difficulty in ascribing whether it be an original or a copy. These become naturally a commercial commodity, and rightly should be taxed.

"Originality," according to a Treasury decision, to satisfy the requirements of the statute, must extend to the thought, object, or conception of the artist; in other words, the vision must be original with the painter; that he has a new and original method is not sufficient basis for the claim of originality. This is an argument which may be disputed. In fact, the average customs inspectors willingly, or unwillingly, do not conform to that theory. There are many paintings which have had their origin in the kind of subject, and the manner of handling, made popular by some master of established reputation. Yet these, perhaps purposeful, or perhaps subconscious borrowings, are allowed to pass as original works.

To an artist the understanding would be that originality consists primarily in the work being done of his own hand, not taking into account those ostensible copies already referred to; and, secondly, if inspired by some other work, then it shall show an original or individual treatment.

Shall not a translation from one medium into another, such as from an oil painting into a chalk drawing, taking only the essential forms and making no attempt, as in a portrait, to render actual colors or tone qualities, leaning only toward the organic line—as seen in the drawings by Holbein, which were studies for the subsequent painting—be deemed an original production as such? The Treasury Board would think otherwise.

I should like to urge a commission of art workers to be appointed to form their opinion, of what is to be termed original, for the benefit of the country in general, and their views transmitted to the authorities at Washington.

A. D. Patterson.

Montreal, Dec. 2, 1918.

The ART NEWS has learned that one of the causes of John S. Sargent's recent trip to Europe was the reported injury in Paris, from shell fragments during the bombardment by "Big Bertha," of a near relative. Mr. Sargent is represented in current London shows by aquarelles.

Mrs. Albert Sterner is preparing an interesting American art feature exhibit for the coming Red Cross Drive on the "Avenue," to consist of invited works especially executed by artists on a given theme.

James Britton's portrait of Miss Jean Oliver, the Boston artist, which strangely disappeared from Miss Oliver's Gloucester studio during the Greek Festival last summer and was thought to have been stolen, has as strangely reappeared and is now in Miss Oliver's Boston studio.

OBITUARY

E. W. Currier

E. W. Currier, a well known painter of California scenes, died Nov. 15 last at a San Francisco hospital. He had been a sufferer for some months although able to pursue his art, to which he was devoutly attached.

The artist passed a deal of time each year at Lake Tahoe, traversing the mountain region with great enthusiasm and always returning with much material. The color and life of Old Chinatown, before the 1906 fire, had afforded Currier much pleasure and he reflected those features with faithfulness. Originally from Ohio, Currier had lived many years in California. His early training was gained in the East.

J. R. De Lamar

Joseph Raphael De Lamar, financier and art collector, died Dec. 1, in Roosevelt Hospital, aged 78. He was born in Amsterdam of Dutch, Spanish, and Hebrew ancestry, and ran away to sea when eight years old. He followed that career for a number of years and then went to Africa and traded in a small way. While still a young man he came to this country as Joseph Delamar, all but penniless, and became identified with copper and silver mining in Colorado and Nevada and accumulated a great fortune, his wealth being estimated at over \$25,000,000 when he married, in 1893, Nellie Virginia Sands, a remarkably beautiful daughter of a New York druggist, he being 50 and she 17 years old. He brought suit for divorce in Paris 10 years ago and the decree was granted, and she later married Mr. Hatmaker.

Capt. Delamar, while engaged in multifarious business enterprises, found time to cultivate the arts and the garden. He had superb gardens and conservatories at his fine estate at Glen Cove, L. I., and devoted much time to the raising and growing of flowers and vegetables. He also bought largely of pictures and tapestries and art objects, but his taste was for the showy rather than quality works, and he was not willing to pay the high prices that the best works command. As a result, his large city house at Madison Ave. and 37th St. and his country house at Glen Cove are filled with a bewildering array of pictures, tapestries and art objects, for the most part bought at auctions or private sale at N. Y. auction rooms, and in many instances bearing attributions to great names, the pictures especially. He was a lavish patron of certain French-American dealers and a N. Y. auction house.

His great wealth, some \$30,000,000, will go almost in entirety to his daughter, Miss Alice Delamar, now about 23, who made her home with him and to whom he was devoted. Her mother, Mrs. Hatmaker, lives in Paris, and her grandmother, the late Mrs. Virginia Sands, died in N. Y. two years ago.

Artist Lemordant to Visit America

America is about to receive the visit of the French painter Jean-Julien Lemordant, exhibitions of whose work will be held in N. Y. and other cities. Jean-Julien Lemordant was at the outbreak of the war a painter who had acquired an enviable notoriety, enviable especially for a man still in his early thirties. His pictures figured at the principal salons, where they attracted the admiration of the leading critics, while he had been entrusted with the decoration of theaters, town halls, and other edifices of historical, municipal, general and private importance. To the themes most painters restrict to the scope of enlarged illustrations—chiefly of Breton life and landscape—he brought a breadth of execution and a sweep of vision very unusual in this genre. He seemed equipped to revive the art of the fresco in modern form and to vie with the old masters in the actual magnitude of their conceptions.

M. Lemordant was one of the early volunteers for the front in 1914. He literally besought the authorities to send him under fire, for, by his age and his military position, he was not designated for immediate active service. He fought in Belgium, on the Marne, before Arras, at Charleroi, where as sergeant major he put a stop to the flight of numerous troops demoralized by the loss of their officers and by the superior forces of the enemy. He had a trench dug and gained time by methodical resistance until he was wounded in the arm. This did not induce him to give up his command and an orderly retreat was the consequence.

On the following day he was promoted Lieut., receiving, as he says, a compliment he valued more than all those which had been showered on him during his previous career as an artist.

Preparatory to an Eastern trip, Miss Constance Peters recently gave her farewell exhibition of pictures in a San Francisco gallery. They were oils ranging from a medium size to small sketches and reflected principally the familiar landscapes about San Francisco bay and in Marin county.